

August 2020



Hello my dear singing friends,

What a strange time of unsettling and change we are in! I hope you are all well, and finding the connections you need to sustain you and bring you joy. Here's a long and detailed letter about this coming year. Read it carefully and then, I hope, you'll choose to sing with us! I looked back at my letters announcing chorus in years past, and wow this year is different in so many ways. **AND, IT'S OUR TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY!** So, a celebration is in order!

CHORUS STRUCTURE AND DETAILS

We will be singing on Thursdays via Zoom this fall starting **Thursday, September 3 from either 10 – 11:30 am OR 7 – 8:30 pm** and run for a twelve-week semester, divided into three 4-week sessions. Choose either the morning or evening meeting time (though if you can't make it to your usual one, feel free to come to the other). You probably know that singing in person is one of the "super spreader" activities, and I'm not willing to risk our health by gathering in person until something shifts.

As usual, singers who want to "try chorus out" are welcome to come on **September 3rd and Sept. 10th to our "Open Sing,"** either morning or evening, though you WILL have to register to receive a Zoom link ([click here for Thursday mornings](#) or [here for Thursday evenings](#)). The Brattleboro Women's Chorus welcomes anyone ages 10 and up who identifies as a woman or non-binary, and whose vocal range comfortably includes the A in the middle of the treble staff.

A theme throughout the 12 weeks will be welcoming the ancestors, healing, and moving into the new and the now.

The chorus semester will be divided into three 4-week sessions with a different "theme" of songs each session. The first 4-week session we will focus on WATER songs, culminating in a singalong on September 24th. The second 4 weeks, Oct. 1 – 22, we'll focus on songs of Change/Justice/Voting and we'll sing them through on Oct. 22. The last 4 week session, Oct. 29 – Nov. 19, we'll sing songs of the Earth, Here and Now. **The concert will be SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22nd.** Though that concert will take shape as we go along, It will be on Zoom and I'm imagining it will be similar in format to our spring concert (singalongs, singing to background tracks, interspersed with poems or readings), except our repertoire will be the songs that we've learned this fall. How cool was it to have over 170 people from all over the country at our Zoom concert last spring?

Beginning with the second week, those who would like to stay to “check in” and chat after chorus can do that.

Beginning with the third week, the first half hour will be sectionals focusing on a more challenging song. This will be ONLY for people who want to put in extra time learning their parts. There will be written music available for these songs, recorded learning tracks, and probably YouTube video learning tracks as well.

Our weekly time together will be mostly songs we can learn in one rehearsal or two, and we'll sing along with backing tracks. I'll continue to create practice tracks and occasional YouTube tutorials. We'll sing good songs for you to take away with you into your daily life, and I'll offer ways you can enjoy exploring your own singing. Each fourth week, we'll sing through the songs we've learned the prior month. FUN!

Zoom gives us the opportunity (smiley face!) to hear ourselves sing with no one to sing in our ear. I KNOW many of you MISS that person singing in your ear....and/ but it really IS an opportunity to get better acquainted with your own voice (as you get to sing a duet with me)!

Zoom ALSO gives us the opportunity to gather from long distances; think about your local friends, but also more far-flung friends you might like to share a weekly rehearsal with. If you think of someone who would love being in chorus, forward this note on to your friend!

A FEW OF THE SONGS WE'LL BE SINGING

I'm actually as excited as ever by the music I will bring to you. I have been attending a lot of singalongs through the spring and summer, and meeting and singing with song-leaders and singers from across the world! There's a lot Zoom can't do, but it CAN span distances so be sure to spread the word about joining the chorus this year so you can sing with friends from afar! And I have learned *WONDERFUL* songs.

*I have **MANY** songs in mind.... Some we've sung before including Ise Oluwa https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49-a_Azk5Y0(read the first comment, that's the right translation) and Breaths <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwLgxyVjwk4>*

*The first “challenge song” will be Mni Wiconi
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzPjkG3akrc>*

Here is another "challenge song", by Joan Szymko (of "River" fame), with lyrics below
<https://www.lorenz.com/choral/school/here>

The Wild Geese – by Wendell Berry
Horseback on Sunday morning,
harvest over, we taste persimmon
and wild grape, sharp sweet
of summer's end. In time's maze
over fall fields, we name names
that went west from here, names
that rest on graves. We open
a persimmon seed to find the tree
that stands in promise,

pale, in the seed's marrow.
Geese appear high over us,
pass, and the sky closes. Abandon,
as in love or sleep, holds
them to their way, clear,
in the ancient faith: what we need
is here. And we pray, not
for new earth or heaven, but to be
quiet in heart, and in eye
clear. What we need is here

One beautiful song I know we'll all learn is the Lost Words Blessing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hg1xFYpXuWA>

ALSO: A SPECIAL PROJECT

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF BRATTLEBORO WOMEN'S CHORUS

On the 25th day of most months, September through May, we'll have singing gatherings, sometimes with guest song-leaders to help celebrate 25 years of being a chorus. Probably held on Zoom, these events will be free for registered singers and their households; we will welcome others by donation.

Friday, September 25

Sunday, October 25

Wednesday, November 25

Probably Friday, December 25,
(Christmas Day)

Monday, January 25

Thursday, February 25

Thursday, March 25 (regular
rehearsal)

Sunday, April 25

Tuesday, May 25

FIRST CELEBRATION GATHERING: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 from 7 - 8:30 pm on Zoom

The BWC began on September 18, 1996, at KidsPLAYce, where my husband Tim was director. I was surprised and blessed to end that fall with over 60 singers! On this first of our special gatherings, we will hope to have as many singers join us as possibly can that were there that first night; we'll share stories and SING some of the songs we sang in that first session.

I am looking for technical help – a "techie companion" or two or three – for these events AND for our rehearsals on Thursday mornings and evenings. Please contact

me if you're interested in helping that way, and could easily handle the technical part of rehearsals. That means you would put lyrics in the chat, and handle individual Zoom problems people may have so I can stay focused on the music. I'm hoping to get enough competent volunteers that nobody would have to do it a lot (unless they want to).

PAYMENT DETAILS: AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE BOARD

We know this time is a challenging one in multiple ways. Finances are one of those challenges for many of us. We want to make certain that chorus is financially accessible to all who are interested, and to that end we are adding a sliding scale option (\$150-\$80) to our fee structure that expands our usual standard fees (\$120 per singer, with \$190 family pair and \$70 student rates). We will also continue to offer financial aid to those who need it. ***We are asking returning singers to please register by August 21*** so Becky has time to plan and order music, if necessary. New singers can register up through the second week of chorus. **Final payments will be due by September 17.**

Our costs for 'chorus online' are not substantially less than chorus in person. Though we don't have some expenses such as rehearsal and concert rentals, we do have extra expenses for technology, and we have to lower our income projections as well, with concerts, fundraisers and singer participation all so different in this new format.

The budget forecast we have created, which includes our important priority of continuing to pay Becky, will require that we dip into our financial reserves this year in order to balance our books. We had hoped to use these reserve funds for our trip to the Sister Singers Festival in the summer of 2022 (now postponed until 2023). SO....if you can pay a little extra this year, or contribute even if you're not able to sing or don't wish to participate in chorus this fall, we welcome that! AND...if you need a little help to participate this year, please make use of our sliding scale, or if even that scale is too much, please ask for the financial aid that we continue to offer. We don't want anyone to let finances prevent them from participating. Together we can all make this work!

ONLINE REGISTRATION THIS YEAR!!

A long-term goal of the board's was to offer an online registration system for our chorus members. This year we have done it thanks to the great work of Anne Campbell and Kate Traeger. Now we can streamline registrations, financial aid forms and offer credit card payments (with a small fee)! Hopefully you will find the

experience relatively straightforward and painless, but if you still need to use the paper format, the registration and financial aid forms are below. Just print and mail in with payment by August 21st for returning singers.

[Here is the link to register online](#). You can also apply for financial aid through this link. You may pay either with cash/check/money order or credit card. If you select cash/check/MO, you just fill out the online form and mail in your check, easy! If registering as an adult, you will need to calculate the amount you wish to pay for the semester (sliding scale), how much you plan to pay today, and how much will be due by 9/17.

As always, if you are able to give more to help someone else join chorus, please indicate so on the registration form. All donations are tax-deductible and will be VERY well received, particularly this year.

You will ALSO have to register via Zoom for the link to the Open Rehearsals ([click here for Thursday mornings](#) or [here for Thursday evenings](#)).

If you are NOT able to join us this year, but would like to make a donation, we would be so grateful. We will be having a few online fundraisers this fall as well that will be open to all, but here is the [link to make a donation to the chorus](#) without registering.

Questions? Email info@brattleborowomenschorus.org

Love in Song,

Becky

Registration Form – Brattleboro Women’s Chorus FALL 2020
OR [Register Online Here](#) and pay online with either check or credit card

Print and mail this form with deposit/payment (amounts below) to:
Brattleboro Women’s Chorus, c/o Becky Graber, 120 Guilford St, Brattleboro VT 05301

Please make all checks payable to: Brattleboro Women’s Chorus or BWC

Returning Singers by AUGUST 21: Send (\$40) deposit **OR**
Pay in full: Adults sliding scale \$150-\$80, Family \$190, Students (age 15-25) \$70
Additional contributions are welcome, and will go to the BWC scholarship fund.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Voice Part _____

How did you Hear about Chorus? _____

Which Rehearsal Will You (Mostly) Sing With? (circle one): Thursday AM Thursday PM

Do you have a song/songs to recommend? _____

The easiest for me is ALWAYS if you have a copy of written music or a recording, or a web link!

Tax-Deductible Contribution (also list below): _____

Other Ideas? Suggestions? Comments?? _____

MONEY ENCLOSED (check those that apply)

_____ \$40 deposit (*remainder due by Sept 17*) _____ \$70 student (between 16 – 25)

_____ Sliding scale adult (\$150-\$80, with \$120 being full price):

Amount you plan to pay _____ Amount you plan to pay today _____

_____ \$190 family pair _____ Other amount

_____ Additional donation enclosed: Amount _____

Total Amount Enclosed: _____



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www.BrattleboroWomensChorus.org

FINANCIAL AID FORM – Fall 2020

To make our chorus accessible to all, financial aid is available. Financial aid is based on need, so please fill out this confidential form and return it to Becky by mail. You may also submit this form through [our online registration form](#) on our website. **RETURN THIS FORM BY THURSDAY, September 17 at the latest.** Our financial aid committee will look at all requests, and then divide aid fairly among those requesting it, with awards ranging between \$25 to a maximum of 80% of the fee. ***A \$20 deposit is requested when submitting this form.***

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Voice Part _____

What is your gross monthly income? _____

How many people (including yourself) rely on you financially? _____

How much aid are you requesting? _____

Are there any special circumstances we should consider? _____

Please make sure you have answered ALL questions and attached your \$20 deposit before submitting this form. The BWC mission is to serve all women, regardless of financial circumstances. Upon special request, deposits may be made in installments. Contact Linda Bailey at 802-254-6965

Thanks! **We'll get back to you via email by September 23rd**